

# Identity, urbanity and division of housing estates in the Czech Republic

Dagmar Kuta and Marek Teichmann

**Abstract.** The housing estates were built on the basis of the urban concept as a whole. These units can be viewed with a certain development potential, which they hide in the framework of a sustainable increase in the quality of life. All housing functions, not only in the housing estate, are decisive for the development of the whole society. In the sphere of housing, a person is born, formed and developed as a social and cultural being, therefore it is necessary to deal with the issue of identity, urbanity and the division of housing estates.



An example of the structure of the Ostrava Dubina housing estate, aerial photograph by Daniel Richterek



Seestadt-Aspern, Vienna, Austria as a good example of how current housing estates can be modernized and conceptually developed.

The long-term goal of development should be to transform into a pleasant, self-sufficient urban district, with a lively, diverse and in many ways normal living environment. There are certain opportunities and development potentials in housing estates for a sustainable increase in the quality of life.

Innovative interventions to increase living quality can be implemented in the following directions:

- Identity - the creation of distinctive characteristic smaller housing units with a unique atmosphere into which the occupant can imprint and perceive a sense of belonging
- Urbanity - the creation of living public spaces, but only in some suitable places in the form of squares, streets or other spaces, such as play, etc.
- Orientation - to create a structured urban ensemble, divided into legible smaller units and neighborhoods, classification of public spaces, creation of a safe and passable network of walking and cycling routes, protection of green open spaces
- Residential quality - protection against traffic, especially motorized individual, noise and fumes, traffic calming. Attracting a quality natural landscape environment, remodeling greenery so that it is possible to use free undeveloped spaces in a variety of ways

Flats situated in "block of flats" type buildings are an important part of the city's usable housing stock. It is not possible for housing estates to turn into ghettos within 10 to 15 years, as some sociologists and architects predict. It is likely that a differentiation will take place between good and bad settlements. We already see its first effects. Privatization will lead to growing disparities. Blocks of higher quality, such as those built in the fifties and early nineties prosperous, the premises, and especially where it is the price of lower plots the number of floors, and apartments will be high. With its settlement built by fate resemble the seventies and eighties, with higher population densities and high maintenance and reconstruction costs, they are in a much worse situation. What is said about housing estates will have a great influence on the speed and the very essence of this process in the future. There is a danger of "self-fulfilling prophecy." In fact, people act far more according to their ideas than according to their real and objective situation. If the quarters built of prefabricated houses are given too negative an image, as has happened in France and England, for example, and people are repeated that they live in undignified conditions, it is likely that the social structure will change faster.